



**Testimony Before the Committee on Children
February 22, 2022**

**Regarding
HB 5155 AN ACT CONCERNING THE SAFE STORAGE OF CANNABIS, CANNABIS
PRODUCTS AND PRESCRIPTION DRUGS**

Rep. Linehan, Sen. Anwar, Rep. Welander, Rep. Dauphinais, Sen. Kelly and members of the Committee:

Thank you the opportunity to provide testimony regarding HB 5155. The Connecticut Pharmacists Association represents over 1,000 pharmacists, pharmacy technicians, and allies from all practice settings, across the state.

As the State's adult-use cannabis program rolls out, it is important that children and others who are not of legal standing to access adult-use cannabis be protected and that consumers have the information they need to make informed decisions about their personal usage. But HB 5155 goes far beyond cannabis, conflating prescription drugs with adult-use cannabis products in a way that is both confusing and potentially dangerous.

Both Section 2 and 3 of the bill treat prescription drugs and cannabis as essentially equivalent from the perspective of safety and access. They are not. They are not offered in the same establishments; they are not subject to the same state and federal regulatory requirements and oversight. From a pharmacology standpoint, adult-use cannabis is virtually unregulated, while prescriptions drugs are the most highly-regulated product in the United States.

Most importantly, prescription drugs are therapies prescribed by highly-trained medical professionals for specific medical conditions—obviously, the casual purchase of recreational cannabis does not come near to meeting this level of professional expertise. Including both prescription drugs and recreational cannabis in a broad bill about child safety suggests a medical equivalency that does not exist, conflates the perception of products that have nothing to do with one another, and will confuse patients and consumers alike.

Further, Section 3 requires pharmacists to “include with the receipt or packaging ... a copy of the document developed by the Department of Consumer Protection pursuant to section 2 of this act.” While this section may be well-intentioned, it creates an expensive, redundant, and unnecessary new step in the pharmacy delivery chain. Child-safe packaging and safe-disposal protocols have been regulatory staples of pharmacy for decades and information about both is readily and easily available to consumers from literally thousands of sources—including the DCP website required by Section 2.

Connecticut's pharmacies fill over 43 MILLION¹ prescriptions each year. Asking pharmacies to bear the costs of the design, printing, production, and distribution of over 43 million pieces of paper will inevitably contribute to the cost of drugs to patients—and have an environmental impact that far exceeds its worth.

Moreover, HB 5155 places the onus of compliance exclusively on Connecticut's local, community pharmacists—it does not address mail order or out-of-state prescription fulfillment, nor does it require prescribers (or others) who distribute prescription drugs via in-office samples or other methods to produce these documents. In other words, Connecticut's approximately 600 independent and local chain pharmacies will incur a new and significant cost of business that their competitors will not.

And, once again, this requirement promotes a false equivalency between cannabis and prescription medications.

Accordingly, all references to prescription drugs ought to be removed from this bill, as should the requirement that pharmacists bear the very real financial and workflow costs of consumer education that is already ubiquitous.

Thank you.

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¹ IQVIA National Prescription Audit (NPA™) database, 2020. <https://www.kff.org/health-costs/state-indicator/total-retail-rx-drugs>